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RESURRECCTION

"FOR THE LORD HIMSELF SHALL DESCEND FROM HEAVEN WITH A SHOUT, WITH THE VOICE OF THE ARCHANGEL, AND WITH THE TRUMP OF GOD: AND THE DEAD IN CHRIST SHALL RISE FIRST." (1 TES. 4:16)



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EDITORIAL

Editorial January 2017

"Moreover the Word of the Lord came to me, saying, go and cry in the ears of Jerusalem, saying, Thus faith the Lord; I remember thee, the kindness of thy youth, the love of thine espousals, when thou wettest after Me in the wilderness, in a land that was not sown" (Jer. 21:1-2).

The Lord, who loves His people in a way that is higher than our ability to comprehend, could no longer endure the fact that His people had chosen to separate themselves from Him. Therefore He speaks through the prophet Jeremiah, telling him to *"go and cry"* in an attempt to grab the attention of His bride by calling out His Words to her. When we want to capture someone's attention, especially in an urgent situation, we raise our voice in order to grab their attention.

This cry stems from God's broken heart, because He of the marvelous, perfect love He has for His bride. No longer being able to endure the separation, indifference, lukewarmness, coldness, and hardness of heart of His bride toward Him, the Lord vents His pain and His burden, using the prophet Jeremiah.

Contained in this cry is a reminder of what His people had forgotten, but the Lord had not forgotten: the love, passion, and gratitude toward Him that had once burned in their hearts in the beginning, when He had delivered them out of Egypt.



PASTOR EFRAIM VALVERDE, III AND FAMILY

They had ceased *"beholding, what manner of love the Father had bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God"* (1 Jn. 3:1). How easy it is, as time passes, to take God's love for granted, and to no longer live in true humility, being amazed, thankful and captivated by His love for us, which saved us from our past and delivered us from the wrath that is to come.

The Lord is seeking to awaken this mindset in us, as He reminds us about what is always on His mind and in His heart. That is why He declares: *"I remember thee"* (Jer. 2:2). The Lord remembered how Israel loved Him in the beginning, when He delivered them out of Egypt with His strong hand and guided them to Mt. Sinai. He chose Israel to be His bride. The Lord remembered and missed the love and tenderness of His bride toward Him. He never forgets the love directed toward Him by those who at one time loved Him with all their heart, soul and strength. *"Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? Yea, they may forget, yet I will never forget thee"* (Isa. 49:15).

The Lord remembers *"when thou wentest after Me in the wilderness, in a land that was not sown"* (Jer. 2:2). He remembered when they sought after Him, not for what He could give or offer to them, other than what was in the wilderness. He remembered when they sought after and followed Him motivated only by the love and gratitude they felt toward their Beloved. This cry from God is a tearful one as He is moved by His love for His people. It is God crying out to His people to return to Him. *"Turn, O backsliding children, saith the Lord; for I am married unto you: and I will take you one of a city, and two of a family, and I will bring you to Zion"* (Jer. 3:14).

Could it be that the Lord misses our love toward Him? Are we experiencing a love in our hearts that moves us to an unconditional surrender to Him or have we neglected this love? Has it diminished or maybe even been lost somewhere along the way? Do we still remember the presence of His Spirit as it worked in us and delivered us out of Egypt, making us His? The Lord to this day continues to call out to His bride. Let us

not make our God suffer like this. He already suffered enough for us at Calvary.

We find this same type of cry of complaint and of warning in the book of Revelation as the Lord calls out to His beloved bride. It is a calling out to his beloved as He desires to feel that faithful love she demonstrated toward Him in the beginning! *"Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love. Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent"* (Rev. 2:4-5).

We read here the same complaint, lament and cry from the Lord directed toward His bride: *"thou hast left"* (separated or divorced from) *thy first love"* (Rev. 2:4), reminding them of the time that this *"first love"* was evident in their lives and how they had fallen from this glorious state. We do not remember what is not important to us. However, we remember the things that we miss and that is something we can never forget. Oh, how the Lord laments when His bride's heart is no longer with Him! Can you hear His cry, His lament and His pain directed toward you?

The person who truly remembers how he lived in the beginning of his walk with the Lord, as he experienced his *"first love"* (Rev. 2:4), and then examines his current walk and realizes how he has fallen, even as he preaches from a pulpit, plays an instrument or sits in the pews of the sanctuary, can do nothing less than be moved to a sorrow



which brings forth repentance (2 Cor. 7:10). Repent, call upon the Lord, asking Him for His Divine strength so that you can do the *"first works"* which are the fruit of the *"first love"* (Rev. 2:4-5). Remember, repent and return to the *"first works."* *"He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith to the churches"* (Rev. 2:7).

So, how should we respond? What should be our answer to the Lord's cry? Understanding that we cannot draw near or return to the Lord by our own strength *"for it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure"* (Phil. 2:13), our response to His cry should be the one we find in His Word. *"Behold, as the eyes of the servant look unto the hand of their masters, and as the eyes of a maiden unto the hand of her mistress; so our eyes wait upon the Lord our God, until that He have mercy upon us"* (Ps. 123:2). We should call upon Him saying: *"Turn Thou us unto Thee, O Lord, and we shall be turned; renew our days AS OF OLD"* (Lam. 5:21).

In this New Year, 2017, may the Lord help us, His bride, to return to Him as never before. With His Spirit and through His Spirit, let us answer His call. God has not forgotten you. *"He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches"* (Rev. 2:7). Let us be attentive to His cry and let us cry out to Him! God bless you.

Your brother in Christ the Lord,

Pastor Efraim Valverde III

GOD'S PROPHETIC CLOCK

Pastor Efraim Valverde III

"Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people (the Jewish people) and upon thy holy city (the old city of Jerusalem)" (Daniel 9:24)

In the year 2016 the United Nations General Assembly adopted 20 resolutions against Israel and only four against the rest of the nations: one each against North Korea, Syria, Iran and Russia.

The World Health Organization condemned Israel as the "only nation in the world which violates mental, physical and environmental health standards." The women of the UN castigated Israel as the "only nation in the world which violates women's rights," and did not even say one word against the misogynist (hatred toward women) practices which are commonplace in Saudi Arabia, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Iran and other societies who oppress women. Likewise, the International Labor Organization condemned Israel as the "only nation which violates labor rights."

UNESCO, the UN organization in charge of safeguarding the history of world heritage sites, adopted a resolution condemning Israel for "participating in acts of aggression" in the Old City of Jerusalem. Also, in reference to the holiest site for Judaism, the Temple Mount and the Wailing Wall, this same group passed a resolution stating these sites can

now only be referred to by their Islamic names: "Haram al-Sharif," "Al Asqa Mosque," and "Al-Buraq Plaza," therefore denying the thousands of years of Jewish and Christian heritage attached to these sites. According to Islamic tradition, "Buraq" was the name of the white horse ridden by "the prophet Mohammed during a nighttime journey to Jerusalem, culminated in his ascension to heaven."

On December 23, 2016, New Zealand, Malaysia, Senegal and Venezuela presented "Resolution 2334" before the UN Security Council. The United States, possessing the power to veto the vote, chose to abstain, which is in effect the same as voting in favor of the resolution. The other 14 nations which comprise the Security Council voted in favor of the resolution: Great Britain, Russia, China, France, Japan, Spain, Angola, Egypt, Malaysia, New Zealand, Senegal, Ukraine, Uruguay and Venezuela.

This resolution declares a non-recognition of the Old City of Jerusalem, Judea, and Samaria as part of Israel, territories captured by Israel defending itself against Egypt, Syria and Jordan in the miraculous "Six Day War" in June of 1967. Through this resolution, the Security Council condemned Israel according to International Law, calling all the housing construction in Jerusalem, Judea and Samaria a "flagrant violation"

and "threat" to the stability, peace and security of the Middle East and of the world itself. Furthermore, they demanded Israel to immediately cease all construction in those areas.

Of the resolutions that were adopted during 2016 in the UN, and even in previous years, "Resolution 2334" is by far the most serious and dangerous one. This resolution, above all, denies and rejects Jerusalem as the eternal capital of Israel.

Barak Obama, who at the time was the president of the United States, dramatically changed the posture the US government had previously maintained: the protection of Israel in the world environment of the UN. This change is no accident. It is a very significant step toward the fulfillment of the final events in God's timing, so that He might fulfill His marvelous plans for Israel and for His Church.

Israel has stated that they have undeniable proof that the United States not only supported this resolution, but that it was instrumental in its drafting and preparation. This was an ambush that the U.S. prepared against Israel, a stab in the back. Since the establishment of the Modern State of Israel to the present, nothing similar had ever occurred. We must now wait to see what lies ahead in the upcoming days.

"I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed" (Gen. 12:3). There is a curse upon those nations whose vote denied Israel's right over Jerusalem, Judea and Samaria (supposedly called "Cisjordan"), the Western Wall and Mt. Moriah. The United States also has a curse upon its head and it has blood



on its hands, because having the power to stop this resolution from passing with its power of the veto, it chose not to do so.

The fact that the Wailing Wall and Mt. Moriah (the Temple Mount) are in the Old City of Jerusalem makes them territories “illegally occupied” by Israel, according to the International Law of the UN. In addition, this law considers that the heart of Israel (Jerusalem), and the heart of Jerusalem (Mt. Moriah and the Western Wall) are now the territories pertaining to an invented people, supposedly called “Palestinians.” (God permitting, I will discuss this point in the next edition.)

Days after “Resolution 2334” was adopted, John Kerry, who was the U.S. Secretary of State at that time, defended the U.S. government’s stance on why it abstained in the voting. He added: “Israel can be a Jewish or it can be democratic, but it cannot be both, and if chooses the one-state solution, it will never truly be in peace.” What he meant is that if Israel wants permanent peace it cannot remain Jewish (referring to the Biblical promises God gave the Jews), while at the same time being democratic. They would have to choose one of the two. If they wanted permanent peace they would have to renounce their Jewishness and choose to be a democracy. This will never happen!

He also stated that it was time for Israel to stop hindering the peace process by working toward the vision of a one state solution, the state of Israel only, and not toward a two-state solution, (a Jewish state alongside a “Palestinian” state), and that the time had come to make the vision of two contiguous states a reality.

The reaction of Israel’s Prime Minister, Benjamin Netanyahu, to

the passing of the aforementioned resolution and to John Kerry’s accusations was a firm one guided by the Almighty God of Israel. He declared that Israel would not subject itself to this resolution or to any other resolution that denies that Jerusalem is the eternal capital of Israel or that would pose a threat or danger to the security and existence of the Jewish state. He also stated that the housing construction for Jews would continue in the land of Israel and that they would not cease! May the Lord continue giving this level of conviction and determination to Israel’s Prime Minister.

“For I will gather all nations (could this be referring to the United Nations organization?) against Jerusalem to battle (the unified city composed of both Modern Jerusalem and Ancient Jerusalem): and the city shall be taken, and the houses rifled, and the women ravished; and half of the city (the Old City of Jerusalem) shall go forth into captivity, and the residue of the people shall not be cut off from the city” (Zech. 14:2). The passing of this resolution is a gigantic step toward the total fulfillment of this prophecy. I say total because we have witnessed this prophecy being fulfilled in stages. First we witnessed the world unite diplomatically against Israel, something which has not brought, nor will it bring, results. This God-given conviction displayed by Benjamin Netanyahu is igniting the wrath of the nations, provoking them to assemble the most powerful armies *“against Judah (the Jews) and against Jerusalem (the Old City)” (Zech. 12:2).*

The day mentioned in **Zechariah 14:2** is drawing near, and when this day arrives the following part of the prophecy will be fulfilled: *“Then shall the Lord go forth, and*

fight against those nations, as He fought in the day of battle. And His feet shall stand in that day on the Mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east, and the Mount of Olives shall cleave in the midst thereof toward the east and toward the west, and there shall be a very great valley; and half of the mountain shall remove toward the north, and half of it toward the south. And ye shall flee to the valley of the mountains; for the valley of the mountains shall reach unto Azal: yea, ye shall flee, like ye fled from before the earthquake in the days of Uzziah king of Judah: and the Lord my God shall come, and all the saints with thee. And it shall come to in that day, that the light shall not be clear, nor dark: but it shall be one day known to the Lord, not day, nor night: but it shall come to pass, that at evening time it shall be light. And it shall be in that day, that living waters shall go out from Jerusalem; half of them toward the former sea, and half of them toward the hinder sea: in summer and in winter shall it be. And the Lord shall be King over all the earth: in that day shall there be ONE LORD, and HIS NAME ONE” (Zech. 14:3-9).

It is certain that we are at the end of the last days. We are in the third month of the Hebrew year 5777 (which symbolizes Perfect Grace) and in the first days of the year 2017, according to the Gregorian calendar. What awaits us is the fulfillment of the most portentous and outstanding prophecy since the first manifestation of Christ the Lord, His earthly ministry, death, burial, resurrection, ascension, the outpouring of His Spirit, the capture of Jerusalem, destruction of the Temple and scattering of the Jewish people.

In this year, 2017, **120 years** (this is equivalent to Master, Lord of life, and victory) will be accomplished since the historic and prophetic first Zionist Congress in Basle, Switzerland, on the **29th of August of 1897**. Also in this year **100 years** (equivalent to coronation, Divinity, God of destiny) will be accomplished since the historic and prophetic Balfour Declaration issued on **November 2, 1917**, which sparked the historically renown official return of the Jews to the Holy Land armed with the hope of one day being a nation once again. Also in this year **70 years** (7 perfect, 10 fulfillment) will be accomplished since the miraculous and prophetic fulfillment of **Isaiah 66:8**, *“shall a nation be born at once (in one day)?”* This question was answered on **November 29, 1947**. And finally, this year **50 years** (equal to the year of Jubilee, Pentecost, and the outpouring of God’s Spirit) will be accomplished since the recapturing of the Old City of Jerusalem on **June 7, 1967**.

Will we soon see the Perfect Grace, the Master, the victorious Lord of life? Will we soon see the Divine One, the God of our destiny, which is the coronation of the children of God? Will we soon see the perfect fulfillment or the fulfillment of perfection? Will we soon witness another Pentecost, an outpouring of God’s Spirit, and a conclusion of the time of the cancellation of debts and deliverance from spiritual prisons? Only God knows.

What else can we say? What we are sure of is that we are living in the last seconds, of the last minute, of the last hour, on God’s prophetic clock. Oh, Lord, help us to be prepared, to proclaim these truths to others and to help them prepare, beginning with our own homes! ■



“For the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise FIRST” (1 Thess. 4:16).

The central theme of the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ is the resurrection of the dead, that is, the conquering death by coming back to life (**Heb. 2:14-15; 2 Tim. 1:10; 1 Cor. 15**).

In His Word God speaks of TWO RESURRECTIONS. The first one is PARTIAL, since in this resurrection *“many”* shall resurrect, but not all (**Dan. 12:2**). The first resurrection is before the “thousand years” (the millennium). The second resurrection is after this thousand year period and is a TOTAL resurrection (**Rev. 20:5-13**).

Knowing that there are only two resurrections, we must divide the judgment of all humanity into two parts. The only alternative we have is to accept the fact that in the first resurrection those who come back to life are the persons who knew or heard about God and His Word. Included in this number are not only the faithful believers, who shall resurrect to *“everlasting life”* (**Dan. 12:2**), but also those who at one point in their lives had known the works of God and had accepted them only to later leave them, or who were exposed to God’s works, but never accepted them.

Counted in this number are *“those who pierced Him”* (**Rev. 1:7**), and those *“who believed not the truth”* (**2 Thess. 2:11-12**) and others. These persons shall resurrect

THE RESURRECTION

Pastor Efraim Valverde, Sr.

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“to shame and everlasting contempt” (Dan. 12:2). Their condemnation consists in the fact that they knew, or witnessed the works of God, but they did not believe them.

“The rest of the dead,” the multitudes among humanity that never heard or knew about God, about His people, about His Word or about His Name

will return to life in the second resurrection, after one thousand years have passed. These persons will be judged solely *“by their works”* (**Rev. 20:5; Rom. 10:14**).

The profound and mysterious reality set forth in the Word of the Eternal One, which in part we can understand and explain and in part we cannot, is that *“all”* who have died will resurrect. They will all return to life (**John 5:28**). I would like to draw the attention of my brethren who are fellow believers in Christ the Lord to the undeniable truth of the resurrection, particularly the first resurrection, which is the one that the verse which headlines this study refers to.

The key expression which we find in this verse is: *“the dead in Christ shall rise FIRST”* (**1 Thess. 4:16**). The question I will answer and explain is the following. Before whom or before what shall they rise FIRST?

LET US CONSIDER THE FOLLOWING REASONINGS

1.- God created man with two natures: human (exterior, visible and temporary, which ends with the death of the person) and spiritual (internal, invisible and immortal, which does not end with the death of the person, **Eccl. 12:7; Heb. 9:27**).

2.- Death, therefore, only has power over the mortal part of man. Therefore, death for a person who is a faithful believer in the Lord is simply the separation of his two natures. The human part passes to *“sleep in the dust of the earth”* (**Dan. 12:2**), and the spiritual part returns to the Creator (**Luke 12:16-20**).

3.- Being that death only operates in the humanity of man, the resurrection is the operation which brings back to life that which died. Therefore, for the resurrection to take effect it is indispensable for death to have occurred.

4.- The resurrection cannot apply to the spirit, the soul or the *“inner man”* (**2 Cor. 4:16**), for the simple reason that this the part of man that does not die, and only what dies can resurrect.

5.- What I have explained here applies to all of humanity in general. However, focusing now on the faithful believer in our Lord Jesus Christ whose hope lies in the marvelous promise described in our headline verse, there is a glorious truth hidden in the word “FIRST.”

6.- The headline verse speaks specifically about the resurrection of the faithful Christians, about the Christian who is *“blessed and holy”* (**Rev. 20:6**). It is referring to those who resurrect to *“everlasting life”* (**Dan. 12:2**). The difference between the resurrection of the faithful believer and the wicked person consists in the fact that the faithful will first come back to life, but then later his body will be glorified, since for the faithful there is no



judgment nor condemnation (**Rom. 8:1**). However the wicked will resurrect to then stand before God to be judged (**Heb. 9:27**).

7.-The word "FIRST" reveals a secret to us when we read the verse in the following manner: *"For the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall FIRST rise"* (**1 Thess. 4:16**).

8.-It is important that we have in mind the difference between the resurrection of Lazarus and the resurrection of the Lord Jesus. Lazarus came back to life in a "corruptible" body which could contract illness, age and eventually die once again. However, the Lord came back to life in a condition that was no longer subject to death. He resurrected in a body that would no longer die but that in due time would be glorified. This is the type of resurrection that the *"dead in Christ"* (**1 Thess. 4:16**) shall experience. It is appropriate to mention here that the bodies of Adam and Eve were originally created by God to not get sick, to not age and to not die. All these things came as a consequence of their sin.

9.-This is the type of resurrection that Paul speaks about amply in **1 Corinthians, chapter 15**. The Word of God cannot contradict itself, so when we read that *"it is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body"* (**1 Cor. 15:44**), it is referring to the operation described in the preceding paragraph. I repeat the basic undeniable truth that what

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resurrects is what previously died, and the spirit does not die.

10.-When the faithful Christian dies, his body then *"sleeps in the dust"* (**Dan. 12:2**). He *"sheds the clothing of the earthly house of this tabernacle"* (**2 Cor. 5:1-7**), and he, *"the inner man"* (**Eph. 3:16**), leaves this *"tabernacle"* (**2 Pet.**

1:13) and departs *"to be present with the Lord"* (**2 Cor. 5:8**). This marvelous truth is something that the faithful follower of Christ the Lord is absolutely sure that has happened with his brother who "departed." He believes this to be true although he cannot see this happening with his natural eyes.

11.-Those in the unbelieving world, as represented figuratively by Thomas (**John 20:24-25**), only believe what they can see. If the resurrection was to occur in the way described in the previous paragraph (we believe this only by faith, but we cannot literally see it with our natural eyes), just as the unbelievers mock us when they hear us say that "our brother departed to be with the Lord," in that same fashion the world would laugh on the day of the resurrection if they did not see the resurrected saints in their living bodies. But they will see the saints in their resurrected bodies because the resurrection is real, physical and literal (**Dan. 12:2; John 5:28-29**).

12.-The glory of God will precisely be manifested when a shocked, unbelieving world will witness the People of the Most High come back to life, in fulfillment of the message that we, the children of God, have believed and preached throughout the ages. This is precisely what the patriarch Job referred to when he declared: *"And though after my skin worms destroy this body; yet IN MY FLESH shall I see God"* (**Job 19:26-27**). Please also read **2 Thessalonians 1:10** and **Revelation 1:7**.

13.-The resurrection of the *"saints which slept"* who, as we are told in the Scriptures, *"came out of the graves after His resurrection, and went into the holy city, and appeared unto many"* (**Matt. 27:52-53**) is a foreshadowing that the Lord gives so that we can have an idea of what will occur when the described in this scriptural portion is repeated, on the multiplied a millions times. Hallelujah!

14.-The supreme evidence by which we can prove what I am stating here is the resurrection of the Lord Himself. After having paid the price to redeem us from sin by offering His Body in His aspect of humanity by dying for us on the cross, the Lord could have immediately transformed His Body from His human aspect to His glorious aspect. But He did not do his. He permitted His Body to be placed in the tomb, then He waited until the third day and then He resurrected. He brought back to life what had died, as I have previously mentioned.

15.-Transfiguration (**Matt. 17:1-2**), is not the same aspect with which He presented Himself to His disciples after resurrecting. He presented Himself to them in His Human aspect, having resurrected in a Body without corruption (this means that He was not yet glorified), and told them: *"Behold My hands and My feet, that it is I Myself: handle Me, and see; for a Spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see Me have"* (**Luke 24:36-43**).

16.-From the very moment that the principal theme of the Word



of God is the resurrection of the dead, the Lord Himself proved this to be true by bringing back to life His Body in the aspect of His Humanity, which He had voluntarily subjected to death (**Phil. 2:8**). After He resurrected His Human Body, He then transformed it to His glorious Body. This is precisely what He has promised to do with the bodies of the members of His people: *"The dead in Christ shall FIRST rise: then we which are alive and remain (these do not resurrect for the simple reason that they did not die) shall be caught up together with them in the clouds..."* (**1 Thess. 4:16-17**). Because, *"We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed"* (**1 Cor. 15:51-52**).

17.-The truth declared by the Lord Himself is that the resurrection applies to all humanity. He stated that there is a *"resurrection of life"* and that there is a *"resurrection of damnation"* (**John 5:29**). This matches exactly with what is prophesied in **Daniel 12:2**, which states that *"MANY...shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame, and everlasting contempt."*

18.-Consequently, the resurrection of the dead is indispensable for the Creator Himself, so that He might manifest His glory through the glorified bodies of His children, and that He might also fulfill His *"incomprehensible judgments"* (**Rom. 11:33**) upon the rest of humanity. It is precisely in these bodies brought back to life in which He will verify those judgments mentioned in **Psalms 50:16-21**, and in the parables in which He rebuked the ministers

who are *"workers of iniquity"* (**Matt. 7:23**) and the negligent servant who *"hid the talent in the earth"* (**Matt. 25:24-25**), etc.

19.-The general idea that the majority of Christianity (especially among those who believe in the rapture) has concerning the doctrine of the resurrection is very superficial. They skim over many of the extremely important details cited in this study, often because they can not explain them. The tremendously marvelous truth is that God's chosen time to be glorified in the supreme manner that He desires is on the day of the resurrection. After all, we are told that *"the whole creation waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God"* (**Rom. 8:18-22**).

20.-Described clearly in the symbolic figure of the *"two witnesses"* (faithful Israel and the faithful Church) is the marvelous event which is the resurrection of the dead bodies of the children of God. *"And their dead bodies shall lie in the street of the great city...Egypt (the world) ...and after three days and a half (the time of the Gentiles) the spirit of life from God entered into them, and they stood upon their feet (Hallelujah!); and great fear came upon them which saw them"* (**Rev. 11:7-12**).

21.-What an exact description of the day of the resurrection. Just as the Lord did with His own Body, His children will first be resurrected. They will then bear witness before the whole world for the glory of the Creator of the universe. Then, having all of humanity seen them come back to life, to the astonishment of all, their incorruptible bodies will

be transformed into glorious bodies. *"And the ascended up to heaven in a cloud; and their enemies beheld them"* (**Rev. 11:12**). Hallelujah!

22.-Let us keep this in mind. The faithful Christians who will be alive on that glorious day (this will be many of those who are alive today, since we are all part of the *"last generation,"* **Matt. 24:34**) will not be subject to the resurrection for the simple reason that they will be alive, and to resurrect it is necessary to be dead. After *"the bodies of the saints who slept,"* FIRST RESURRECTED, and after they *"appeared to many,"* then all of us (those who resurrected and those who are still living) *"will be changed...in the twinkling of an eye"* (**1 Cor. 15:51-52**), *"and shall be caught up together...in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord"* (**1 Thess. 4:1**).

23.-It is also on this marvelous day when God will fulfill His promise to faithful Israel, for on that day *"all Israel shall be saved"* (**Rom. 11:26**). It is on this marvelous day when, in God's chosen people, will be fulfilled what God promised them by way of His prophets. After all, if we, the Gentiles, the *"dogs"* (**Matt. 15:22-28**) who were outside, because of their *"blindness in part"* (**Rom. 11:25**) are now partakers of this glory, *"what shall the receiving of them be, but life from the dead?"* (**Rom. 11:15**). Hallelujah!

24.-It is on that marvelous day of the resurrection, when the God will accomplish in Israel the following: *"Behold, O my people, I will open your graves,*

and cause you to come up out of your graves, and I will bring you into the land of Israel. And ye shall know that I am the Lord (JESUS) when I have opened your graves, O my people, and brought you up out of your graves" (**Ezek. 37:12-13**). On that day, saith the Lord: *"they shall look upon Me whom they pierced"* (**Zech. 12:10**). *"And one shall say unto Him, What are these wounds in thine hands? Then He shall answer, Those which I was wounded in the house of My friends"* (**Zech. 13:6**). On that day they will see the Lord Jesus and will realize that He is the same God of the Old Testament (YHWH), the Messiah for whom Israel has been waiting for more than three thousand years, and they will believe in Him. Then, *"all Israel shall be saved"* (**Rom. 11:26**).

25.-When God in His infinite wisdom decided to create all things, He created a factor which we call "time," and subjected all of creation to time. Creation, to this present time, is part of the kingdom of *"things that are shaken"* as mentioned in **Hebrews 12:27-28**. And, when everything that is subject to time reaches *"the end"* (**1 Cor. 15:24**), time itself will be *"no longer"* (**Rev. 10:6**). At that time we will partake of the kingdom *"which cannot be shaken"* (**Heb. 12:28**). But now, since we are still part of the kingdom *"of things that are shaken,"* which is subject to time, the day that is most important and glorious for the Creator, who is our God, and consequently important for us as well, who are His people here on earth, and also important for the angels in heaven is THE DAY OF THE RESURRECTION■



HOW TO FIGHT AGAINST THE ILLICIT IMPULSES

I repeat that the most powerful weapon the faithful child of God can use to defend himself against all his illicit impulses, beginning with the sexual impulses, is a greater level of fear toward God. This applies to all believers throughout all the ages and throughout all the times and situations we can enumerate. In addition to this profound fear of God is the level of determination the believer possesses to seek the Lord and to ask Him for His help through reading and meditating on His Word and through prayer and fasting.

This is the counsel I have always given the single young men and women who, on many occasions and in different times and places, have asked me for counsel on how they can control their sexual impulses. These are innate impulses which they wished they didn't have and they suffer from a guilty conscience, seeing that they cannot free themselves from those impulses.

I give this same advice to those men and women who, for one reason or another (and there are many different reasons), are serving the Lord without a companion by their side. I say this especially to those who are still in the age that their human condition forces them to seek the protection of marriage. The assistance that these faithful Christians can receive from their pastors is invaluable.

THE FILTH OF OUR FLESH (PART IV)

Pastor Efraim Valverde, Sr.

And referring once again to young people who have not yet married, I have explained to them that if they sense that they are physically mature in the sexual aspect as men and women, then their only alternative is to seek the refuge of marriage. For this reason I have always been willing to help those young people who feel this way, so that they can marry. I have also counseled their parents to allow them to marry also. This solution is one which applies to single adults and single youth as well: *"I say therefore TO THE UNMARRIED AND WIDOWS, it is good for them if they abide as I. But if they cannot contain, let the marry: for it is better to marry than to burn"* (1 Cor. 7:8-9).

THOSE OF US WHO ARE MARRIED

I believe that since I have already been married for more than half a century, I have earned the right to comment on this subject. As I have already amply explained *"marriage and the undefiled bed"* (Heb. 13:4) is the seal of honor for the sexual act, which in any another setting is considered to be sin. It is in marriage where the mutual protection operates. The man is protected sexually by his wife and her husband

The innate sins are the most dangerous, because no matter how hard we try, or how desperate we get, the faithful Christian cannot rid himself of them. They are part of his being and of his humanity. This is the undesirable "filth of the flesh" which Peter mentions (1 Pet. 3:21) and the "sin which dwelleth in me," which Paul mentions (Rom. 7:20). Among these innate impulses which torment each child of God who wants to live a pure life are the sexual impulses.

sexually protects the woman. It is of supreme importance for every Christian couple to understand this. This is exactly what Paul refers to when he makes the comment: *"Let the husband render unto his wife due benevolence: and likewise also the*

wife unto the husband. The wife hath not power over her own body, but the husband: and likewise also the husband hath not power of his own body, but the wife. Defraud ye not one the other, except it be with consent for a time, that ye may give yourselves to fasting and prayer; and come together again, that Satan tempt you not for your incontinency" (1 Cor. 7:3-5).

I am aware that the neglecting of this wise warning made by the apostle has brought serious problems and has even destroyed many marriages. It affects both ministers and members. The environment and modern lifestyle in which we live today lends itself to the violating of this godly advice. The result has been and continues being the destruction of many marriages which would still be intact if the couples had heeded this advice.

However, the sad reality is that this carelessness can happen not only for material reasons, but it is also possible to use the sacred things of God to cause mutual harm in our marriage. I have known many husbands, ministers and members, who at one time were faithful, but who were spiritually ruined because they were neglected by a "very consecrated" wife who fasts, prays and strives to serve the Lord, but who has forgotten that she is a woman, and as such has a unique responsibility in the sexual life of her husband.

I have also seen this same situation apply in reverse. Wives who were at one time faithful women of God have gone astray because their husband is so



occupied in “the work of the Lord” that he has neglected the sexual needs of his wife. This neglect has forced her to do something she never thought she would do. Many of these wives, being alone and “defrauded” (1 Cor. 7:5), have fallen victim to instruments of Satan who know how to take advantage of such circumstances.

The truth is that marriage, even above all the romantic and emotional aspects, is sex. It is imperative that the man and woman who join in marriage be aware of this fact. Those couples who have united their lives without having a clear understanding of this fundamental truth have not remained together long. I remember in the beginning of my walk that there was a married couple who were going to be baptized. The wife announced publicly that she and her husband would not have sexual relations once they were baptized because she was under the erroneous impression that this was sin. As a result after only a short period of time her husband left her to look for a companion who would be a true woman to him, sexually speaking.

I do not in any way condone infidelity in a marriage, especially among those who claim they serve God. However, we cannot judge all cases of infidelity with the same measuring stick. As I have previously explained, the circumstances will vary greatly in every case, but the origin of each case is always the same: THE FILTH OF OUR FLESH.

God bless you. ■

WHY WE BAPTIZE IN THE NAME OF JESUS CHRIST

Pastor Efraim Valverde, Sr.

This is a topic that is of supreme importance to the faithful who serve the Lord, as well as to those who are drawn to the Gospel and who want to know more about God’s truths. For this reason we will occupy ourselves in studying this topic on this occasion.

The Lord, after having fulfilled the time of His earthly ministry (during which He preached His Gospel and performed many great manifestations of His power), and after having resurrected, when the time came for Him to ascend unto heaven, He gave a commandment to His apostles, telling them: *“Go ye unto all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature. HE THAT BELIEVETH AND IS BAPTIZED SHALL BE SAVED; but he that believeth not shall be damned”* (Mark 16:15-16). It is also written in Matthew 28:19 that the Lord declared: *“Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, BAPTIZING the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.”*

The apostles knew that they must treat this is commandment with all the due importance that it required. Therefore, on

the day of Pentecost, after having received the gift of the Holy Spirit, in response to the question posed by the multitude that was gathered there: *“Men and brethren, what shall we do?”*, Peter responded: *“REPENT, and BE BAPTIZED every one of you IN THE NAME OF JESUS CHRIST for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit”* (Acts 2:38).

Philip, while he was in Samaria, baptized the Samaritans in the Name of the Lord Jesus, according to what is written in Acts 8:16. When the apostle Peter was in the home of Cornelius, a Gentile, after the Holy Spirit was poured out upon all those who heard Peter’s sermon, *“he commanded them to be baptized in the Name of the Lord”* (Acts 10:48). The apostle Paul encountered in Ephesus a group of believers who had believed in the message preached by John the Baptist. After he explained to them what they were lacking, they were baptized in the Name of the Lord Jesus (Acts 19:5). Paul himself bears witness of having been baptized, calling on the Name of Jesus Christ the Lord (Acts 22:16).

When Paul writes to the brethren in Rome, he points out that the members of the Church who lived in that city were also baptized in the Name of Christ Jesus the Lord (Rom. 6:3). Also, in his letter to the Church in Galatia, he also mentions this great truth (Gal. 3:27). I believe that the Scriptures I have cited are sufficient proof of the fundamental importance of this great doctrine, which is BAPTISM IN THE NAME OF JESUS CHRIST THE LORD FOR THE FORGIVENESS OF SINS (Acts 2:38; 1 Pet. 3:21; Matt. 28:19; Mark 16:16).

In case someone might ask: Why did the apostles always baptize in the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ and not in the titles, “Father, Son, and Holy Spirit,” the answer is quite simple and clear. They knew that THERE IS ONLY ONE GOD, and that Unique, Eternal God, who is the Father, has also chosen to manifest Himself as the Son in order to redeem His children from sin. He Himself is the Holy Spirit, who has anointed with His precious gift those who of us who have believed in Him. Therefore, the NAME of the Father, the Name of the Son, and the Name of the Holy Spirit is JESUS CHRIST, which is GOD’S NAME *“given among men, whereby we must be saved”* (Acts 4:12).

God bless you. ■



Greetings to all brethren who read this Christian publication. I believe I can describe the atmosphere of the past seminar with one word: Marvelous! God's presence was very evident. How can I describe it? When the Only and one God manifests His Presence, the spiritual environment emanates blessing and gives eternal life! That is hard to put into words.

The truth is that it is difficult to give a precise explanation of what God chose to do in this past seminar. It was an extraordinary experience which lasted three days. The activity began on Friday, December 23, 2016, in the evening. Even from the first day, a large number of the people of God had gathered. In fact, the attendance at this seminar was greater than any previous seminars. Our special guests, Shlomo Hizak, President of the Center for Biblical Studies and Research in Jerusalem, Israel, and his friend, Robert Ilatov, member of the Israeli political party, Yisrael Beiteinu, which means: "Israel is Our Home, together with our pastor, began sharing and ministering on the first day. Upon completion of that first night we knew and felt that something special was in store for us for the remaining days of the seminar.

The following Saturday morning more brethren arrived and we could see the fervent enthusiasm on their faces. After a delicious breakfast, the activities began for the day. Our brother Shlomo spoke to us about his deep connection with the

Annual seminar, Salinas CA



ministry in Salinas, remembering and sharing the story of how he met our elder pastor, Efraim Valverde, Sr. He made memory of how the elder pastor would speak to him with tears in his eyes about his love for the people of Israel. He also shared how every time he visits Salinas for activities such as this one, he feels at home. He then turned the place over to Mr. Robert Ilatov who also expressed his strong sense of appreciation for the Christian community gathered here and shared about "the great need that the people and the State of Israel have, the

need to have friends such as those gathered here," Mr. Ilatov expressed. Especially in these times where there is such a high level of anti-Semitism in the world. He told us that the members of the Knesset (Israeli parliament) were aware of the love, support and passion for the people of Israel found here. Afterward, bro. Shlomo spoke again and shared with us on he is saddened to hear many Christians speak negatively about the Jewish people and Israel. After we returned from the dinner break, our pastor, Efraim Valverde III, was moved to provoke us to seek

God. It was glorious to hear the cries and supplications of the great multitude as we called upon the Lord for more than an hour. Following this was a teaching concerning several emphatic and clear points regarding the history of Israel and what they have had to suffer because of their calling. There was a brief interval during the first part of pastor Efraim's dissertation because reporters from one of a local television station arrived and interviewed Robert Ilatov and our pastor. That night ended with a rejoicing and joy that tasted like heaven, because it was filled with substance due to what we had heard.

The final day arrived too quickly. We gathered at 10 a.m. and once again, although it was a brief service that lasted only three hours, God confirmed to us that it brings Him joy when we love His people upon which He has placed His signs.

Let us love the people of Israel and let us thank God for the vision He has given our pastor to continue affirming us in truths that should never die.

If you would like more information, you should acquire the videos, because it is impossible to share everything in just a few lines. You can request them from the Maranatha Bookstore at the following telephone number: (831) 422-3449.

Shalom, your brother and servant,
Philip M. Nava ■

First of all I would like to thank our Lord Jesus Christ, the Only God, for allowing us to host this activity one more year, since it has been a big blessing for us. God bless all of our brethren who visited us from different places.

Once again our brother, Nestor Quintanar, ministered to us the Word of God, together with other pastors from different congregations that were able to accompany us. We thank our pastor, Efraim Valverde III, for his prayers, although he could not be with us on this occasion. The activity began on Friday, November 11, 2016, with the

Service in Miguel Alema, Sonora, Mexico

teachings brought forth by our brother, Nestor Quintanar, who spoke to us about God's great mercy and love. Saturday morning Pastor Alfredo Tienda spoke to us about: Who God is, who Israel is, and who the Church is. In the evening, our brother, Nestor Quintanar, gave us counsel, telling us to ask God to open our mind so that we might understand the

true significance of prayer and fasting. He told us that we should not do it just because someone tells us to do it, but that we should do it on our own so that we might draw closer to God. He also spoke to us about teaching and serving (Jonah 3:1-10 and 4:2), because God is merciful (Jer. 18:7-11). On Sunday, bro. Nestor spoke to us about loving God, and how that

the love for God has died in many brethren. He also told us that we should not tarnish our "white robes." He also gave us counsel on various other topics. God bless our brother, Pastor Justino Flores, for the great support he has given us both spiritually and economically. I thank God for the presence of the pastors who were able to attend, although I might not mention them all by name. Please do not forget to pray for us.

Greetings and blessings,
Pastor Delfino Chavez Lopez ■



Service in Guerrero Negro, BCS, México

Esteemed brethren, I greet you in the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ. I would first like to thank God for granting us the privilege of hosting our first fellowship service.

The activity began on Friday at 6 p.m. with our brother Juan Moreno sharing the Word of God with us. Next, our brother Daniel Ybarra spoke, teaching us that we must seek the face of the Lord so that there would be changes in our life.

On Saturday brother Daniel Ybarra spoke to us about the filth of the flesh, which causes so much harm to the children of God. The Scriptures he used as a base for his teaching were 1 Peter 3:21 and Romans 7:18. The morning service ended at 2 p.m. After the lunch break our brother Daniel

gave the place to each pastor so that each one of us could make a public pledge before God and before the congregations to make changes in our lives. Later he provoked us to seek the Lord with our all of our heart through prayer.

On Sunday morning, our brother Juan Moreno taught us concerning the Oneness of God and we ended the service after baptizing one person in the Name of the Lord Jesus. I thank our Pastor, Efraim Valverde III, for his support in favor of this activity.

God bless you, and please continue praying for the congregation in Guerrero Negro, BCS.

Your brother in Christ,
Pastor Chuy Bailon.■

Service in Greenfield, CA

My brethren, may the Lord bless each one of you.

Once again our annual fellowship service was a great blessing. The Lord spoke to us in the morning through His Word. Then, in the evening He used our brother, Philip Nava, to minister to us. The Lord touched us through His Spirit and filled us through His Word. We thank the Lord for manifesting His presence among us. We also thank the brothers who accompanied us in this service. Let us continue going forward in the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Your brother in Christ,
Pastor Carlos de Jesus.■

I give my God many, many thanks for allowing me to share something concerning the Seminar for Pastors and Ministers which took place in Guadalajara, Jalisco, during the days of September 22-25, 2016, which as always was a great blessing, because once again the presence of the Shepherd of shepherds was with us. What a marvelous Presence! There is no presence greater than His presence, when God chooses to attend the meeting to assist us that are gathered there. And, as we gather together, God uses vessels to advance His purposes, and every one that attends plays an important part, both those who God uses to speak to us, as well as those that God uses to hear, so that we can all hear His voice.

God bless our brother and pastor, Efraim Valverde III, who was moved by God to speak what God placed in his heart. He shared many things, so much that it is impossible to mention them all in these few lines, but I will share briefly some of what he shared with us. He spoke to us about the responsibility that God has placed in the pastors, wherever He has placed them, concerning what we speak from the pulpit, and to whom we allow to speak whenever we have a visiting minister. He stated that not just because someone presents themselves as a minister should we give them the place without knowing what they teach, because we, as

pastors, bear the responsibility of what is spoken from behind the pulpit. He also felt moved to call our attention about *"the first love"* (Rev. 2:4). How tremendous it is that someone, even being a pastor, could be fallen without realizing it, simply because he has lost his *"first love"* (Rev. 2:4). That is why the Lord says: *"Remember from where thou art fallen, and repent"* (Rev. 2:5). He told us to examine ourselves to see with what mindset we are doing things.

God also placed in our brother's heart to share about the origin of the Humanity of the Lord. What marvelous treasures! What great a revelation it is to know that God in One and that His Name is One. God is not three. God is not two. GOD IS ONE. He is unique, because it is God who states this of Himself: *"before Me there was no God formed, neither shall there be after Me"* (Isa. 43:10). Concerning the Humanity of the Lord, there are those who believe that His Humanity began in Bethlehem, but this is not true, because *"in the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God"* (John

1:1). *"And the Word was made flesh"* (John 1:14). *"And without controversy great is the mystery of Godliness: God was manifest in flesh"* (1 Tim. 3:16). What a marvelous mystery and what a marvelous revelation: *"The mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ; in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge"* (Col. 2:-3)!

What a great privilege we have received, and with it what a great responsibility. Because God did not give us this revelation just for us to say: "What a beautiful message." He gave it to us so that we can share it. And who can share the message of the Oneness of God? Only those who have received it can share it. This message that GOD IS ONE cannot be shared by someone who believes or thinks that there are "two Gods." Neither can it be shared by someone who believes that there are "three Gods." Nor can it be shared by someone who does not believe that God has a visible Image. For our part, we thank God that He has revealed to us that He is One, and that first thing that He did in all of His creation was to beget His Body, which He called the Son,

Body, Beginning of creation, Firstborn of all creatures, *"who is the Image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature"* (Col. 1:15). Glory to God!

Therefore, what great things God gives us when we gather together with the same mind *"for there the LORD commanded the blessing, even life for evermore"* (Psa. 133:3).

Thank God for our brother, Pastor Efraim Valverde III. Let us continue praying for him and for his family. Let us also pray for our brethren who contribute so that this seminar can take place. Also, let us pray for our brothers and sisters who serve us the material food and for each one that assists in this work, both near and far, so that we may continue to attend this meeting. May God also bless all of my brethren who read this publication "Maranatha," and who appreciate the messages that are transmitted by this means of communication.

My brethren, the Lord is coming soon. May the hope that we have to see Him and to be with Him continue to motivate us to continue waiting on Him. Pray for us here in Purepero, Michoacan. My family, the congregation and I greet you: May God speak well of you.

Your brother in Christ the Lord,

Pastor Alfredo Corcoles.■

Annual Pastor & Ministers Seminar Guadalajara, México



Service in Ventura, CA

We give infinite thanks to the King of glory, our Lord Jesus Christ, for allowing us to host our annual service once again on November 19, 2016, where we were able to receive our brothers who accompanied us. We were able to savor what is expressed in **Psalm 133:1**, *"Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity."* The Lord manifested Himself and blessed us marvelously.

We thank all the pastors and all of the congregations who honored us

with their presence. We also thank the Lord for all that He permitted us to do on this day of many blessings. First of all, the pastors greeted us and shared with us what the Lord has been doing in their lives.

God bless brother Philip Nava who shared the Word of God with us, since our brother, Pastor Efraim

Valverde III, could not attend. May the Lord bless and keep Pastor Efraim III wherever the Lord takes him. We rejoiced in all that transpired and for all that we were able to do praising and glorifying the Name of the Lord through song and worship. I would especially like to thank the Lord for granting me the privilege of being among my brethren to rejoice and

praise the Lord. We are anxiously awaiting our Lord Jesus Christ who is returning soon, and we are going to receive Him. May God bless all of you and greetings to all the brethren who are part of this fellowship. We also ask the Lord to bless the new president of the United States. Let us pray for him, as well as for other world leaders as the Word of God instructs us to do.

Pastor Pedro Aguilar and congregation in Ventura, Ca. ■

Service in Mexicali, México

I greet you with the Peace of our Lord Jesus Christ, giving the true God thanks for allowing us the privilege of gathering once again this year in the fellowship service that we hosted on October 28-30, 2016, where we once again had the privilege to see our brethren for different places, and to praise our God with the same mind, *"the mind of Christ"* (1 Cor. 2:16). We were accompanied by our brethren from Tijuana, Las Vegas, Vicente Guerrero, Hermosillo, Morelos, Vista, Salinas, as well as from other places.

On Friday our brother, Pastor Alfredo Tienda, ministered to us from the Word of God, sharing with us about "the foundation" we have as children of God (Matt. 7:24). He told us that we must be sure about where we are standing, where our spiritual foundation lies, that

we might be a blessing to our brethren who might seek our help. He said that we can fortify this foundation through prayer through which we strengthen our relationship with God.

On Saturday morning we had the privilege of hearing the voice of the Lord through the lips of Pastor Miguel Gonzalez, who the Lord used greatly to minister to the hearts of each one of us who were present. We beseech the Lord that He will continue to use our brother to speak His blessed Word. On Saturday evening, our brother, Pastor Efraim Valverde III, spoke to us about

the importance of loving God. He stated that God loves it when we need Him, but that He loves it even more when we love Him with all our heart, since God has given us the privilege of stirring His heart, something that the angels cannot do. The only ones who can do this are us, the children of God. Our God demands that we love Him as it is written in His Word: *"If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be accursed"* (1 Cor. 16:22).

His Second Coming is near and our walk with Him here will determine our eternal destination. May the Lord

Jesus help us to not be counted among the "fallen." May He examine us and may we do His work solely motivated by our love for Him, because when we are not doing His will, we are causing our God to weep. God is calling our attention concerning the lukewarmness of our hearts and is waiting for us to lift up our eyes toward Him, so that He can fulfill His purpose in each one of us.

We ask you in the love of the Lord that you remember us in your prayers, so that the Lord Jesus will help us continue in His path, and so that at the end of our journey, we can all together receive the crown of life which God has prepared, eternal life with Him.

Your brother in Christ,

Pastor Pablo Ojeda ■

Service in San Martin, Oaxaca, México

It is an honor for me to participate in this publication which has been a tremendous blessing for me, for my family and for all who love the Lord Jesus, and who appreciate this ministry and this vessel, our pastor, Efraim Valverde III.

I bless our King of kings because He allowed us to once again be in San Martin del Estado, Oaxaca. We initiated on Friday, Dec. 23, 2016 at noon. That afternoon our brother, Pastor Luis Rogel from Santa Fe, Guerrero, ministered to us. He spoke to us about humbling ourselves, repenting and returning to our first love, because if we did not do so, we would face judgment from the Lord. In the evening we heard the voice of the Lord from the mouth of our brother, Gilbert Tienda, who spoke about the importance of appreciating the great privilege of having received from

God the revelations which the Lord chose to reveal to our elder pastor of blessed memory, Efraim Valverde, Sr., and which now continue through our pastor, Efraim Valverde III. He stated that we must not forget that the Lord called us to help one another draw closer to Him and not to condemn one another (John 3:17).

On Saturday morning, brother Luis Rogel shared with us that we must not be rebellious to the voice of the Lord, as stated by the apostle Paul: *"I was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision"*

(Acts 26:19). What a blessing we receive when we are obedient! But what ruin we bring to our lives when we are rebellious! Our brother Gilbert Tienda continued with the same theme, adding that in addition to the truths that unite us, there is also a genuine companionship, and he counselled us that we must strive to strengthen the bonds between us. Before we dismissed for the dinner break, four of our brethren were baptized. Afterward, our brother provoked us to call upon the Lord. The Lord blessed greatly during

the prayer! In the evening service, our brother, Santiago Cruz from Cuicatlana, Oaxaca, reminded us of the privilege to be begotten of God.

On Sunday morning we began the fast with prayer, and after a time of praise and worship through song, the pastors in attendance greeted the brethren. (God bless all the pastors for their support.) Afterward, brother Gilbert Tienda committed us to seek the Lord more and to correct our way of life as we begin the new year, 2017, knowing that the signs of the last days are being fulfilled. He also spoke to us about the current situation in Israel. To end the activity another 5 brothers were baptized. Glory to the Almighty for His Mercy!

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YOUTH SECTION

Bro. Moises Garcia

God bless my fellow young brethren in the faith. Your brother Moises Garcia greets you in the love of the Lord Jesus Christ.

It is an honor and a privilege for me to be able to share a bit of my testimony with you. I grew up in the church, but at the age of sixteen I stopped attending and began following the current of this world, being influenced by the friends I had surrounded myself with. As the Scripture states: *"He that walketh with wise men shall be wise: but a companion of fools shall be destroyed"* (Prov. 13:20). While I was living this ungodly lifestyle, I caused much pain to my family because of my rebellion. The person I hurt the most was my dear mother, whom I caused many tears. Each time I was going to go out with my friends at night my mother would cry and would beg me not to go with them. Because I am her only son, she would always shower me with love and affection (Deut. 28:15). But my pride and my rebellion was so great that I did not even care about how my parents lived or how they were doing, physically.

The situation deteriorated to the point that there was no longer peace in my home. I was always arguing with my parents, telling them to let me live my life the way I wanted to live it. I felt that I did not need their advice. I thought I knew everything there is to know about "being a man" (Prov. 13:25). One night my friends and I were returning from a concert. I was driving the car. However, the combination of having stayed up late and having consumed alcohol made me feel very drowsy. I was driving at a high speed on the freeway and suddenly began dozing off. I began losing control of the steering wheel and the car began heading straight toward a semi-trailer with the possibility of being caught under its tires. If that had happened I would not be writing this brief testimony. But by the Grace of God and by His great mercy nothing happened to me (2 Pet. 3:9). At that moment I remembered

all that my father had told me about hell (Isa. 14:11; Matt. 13:42; Rev. 20:10).

As young people many times we are very stubborn and do not want to listen to our parents or to anyone else that wants to speak to us about the things of God. At that moment that this was occurring I began calling out to the Lord in my mind, asking Him to forgive me for all the things I had done that were not pleasing to Him. I thank the Almighty Lord for lifting me up once again and for allowing me to once again walk in His heavenly path. Young person, if you have strayed from walking with the Lord, please do not wait any longer in returning to the house of the Lord. One thing I struggled with tremendously is the fear that the brothers would judge me, or how they would look at me or what they would think of me. But as the Scripture states: *"Fear Him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell"* (Matt. 10:28).

Thank God for our brother, Pastor Efraim Valverde III, whom God has used in a very special way to provoke us return to our first love. My young brother or sister who might be reading this, I speak to you from the depths of my heart. You are not the only one who is struggling spiritually. I encourage you to keep fighting.

My fellow young people, this was a brief portion of my testimony of what God has done in my life. Every time I look in the mirror I am reminded of the miracle that God has done.

"And above all things have fervent charity among yourselves: for charity shall cover a multitude of sins" (1 Pet. 4:8).

I ask you to please keep in your prayers, wherever you might be. Please pray for the youth in Mount Vernon, Washington, and for our pastor Feliciano Lopez and congregation of Templo Bethel. I love you in the love of the Lord Jesus.

Your brother and servant in the faith, Moises Garcia. Amen!■

WOMEN OF GOD

Sis. Enoy Martinez



My sisters in Christ, I greet you with the Peace of God, and I also greet all those who may read this article.

I would first like to thank God for granting me the opportunity to write this article for the "Maranatha." I thank God for my pastor, Efraim Valverde III and for his family. My name is Elizabeth Enoy Martinez and I am a member of the congregation "Temple Philadelphia" in Salinas, California.

I would like to share two verses with you: **Proverbs 3:6** and **Luke 1:37**. To begin I would like to share with you how God changed my life and the lives of my children 22 years ago. My husband, Gino Martinez, died of a heart attack. Within less than an hour of having suffered the attack, he departed to be with the Lord. We were left very saddened and paralyzed emotionally. The sun did not shine for us. At that time our daughter, Jessica, was 11, our son, Gino, was 6, and our son, Moises, was 5. They were so sad that they did not want to play, and they cried always, even in their sleep. All three of them became ill due to their profound sadness.

I consoled myself by reading the Bible, and one night God moved me to read **Isaiah 41:10**, which states: *"Fear thou not; for I am with thee."* My husband was very communicative with us. He always played with the children and sang to them. But one day, while he was practicing a song with our daughter, Jessica, so that she could sing it in

church, suddenly that communication between father and children stopped. Daddy's voice was no longer heard in our home.

I tried my best to give them affection, but it was impossible for me to transform sad children into happy children, with a will to live. It was at that time that the verse in **Luke 1:37** came to my mind: *"For with God nothing shall be impossible."* I told my God: "Lord, for You it is possible for my children to be comforted, so that I might see them play again." At that precise moment they got up to play and began riding a bicycle. It is then that God gave me the verse in **Proverbs 3:6**, *"In all thy ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct thy paths."* I told God: "My God, take control of my children. I present them to you from this day forward. Grant them life, and when they grow up, may they not be a cause for pain for anybody." As a testimony I say that God answered my prayer. All three of my children finished school and all three of them are now educators.

I take the liberty to share another testimony for the honor and glory of God. On December 15, 2007, my two sons, Gino and Moises, were involved in an automobile accident, together with their friend, Ray Zamora. The driver of the other car was drunk. The car that my sons and Ray were driving was totally destroyed, but my sons and their friend escaped without injury. I thank God for protecting my sons.

I invite those who have not yet established a relationship with God to seek after Him. He is our hope during this life and our glory in death. In Christ the Lord we have the victory, the comfort, the peace and the resignation in the midst of what we pass through. Read your Bible and you will see that God tells us what to do and what not to do.

I bid farewell, and I desire *"the blessing of the Lord, (upon you for) it maketh rich, and He addeth no sorrow with it"* (Prov. 10:22).■



BAPTISM IN THE NAME OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST

PASTOR EFRAIM VALVERDE, SR.

(Matt. 3:16). Likewise, when Phillip baptized the Ethiopian eunuch, the Scriptures tell us that *"they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him. And when they were come up out of the water..."* (Acts 8:38-39).

WHAT NAME SHOULD BE INVOKED DURING BAPTISM?

The Lord commanded His disciples to baptize the Gentiles *"in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit"* (Matt. 28:19), and when the apostles carried out the Master's commandment, they baptized thousands upon thousands of believers in the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ. They did not disobey the Lord, as some have had the audacity to say. On the contrary, they faithfully executed His commandment, because they had understood that the "Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit" is JESUS the Lord, and that He is ONE. They understood when the Lord told them: *"He that hath seen me, hath seen the Father"* (John 14:9). They understood that *"God was manifest in the flesh"* (1 Tim. 3:16). They understood that the Lord Jesus was Israel's Messiah, and that He could be none other than God Himself, because there is only one God (Deut. 6:4, Isa. 44:6). They understood that only the God, YHWH, can save, and they were given revelation to understand that the Lord Jesus is that same God, because the Name of God given to men that they might be saved is JESUS the Lord (Acts 4:12). This is the Name *"which is above every other name"* that Joel mentioned when he prophesied: *"That whosoever shall call on the name of the LORD shall be delivered (saved)"* (Phil. 2:9, Joel 2:32).

The following Scripture verses bear witness that the original believers in
Continue on page..... 15

The doctrine of baptism is a subject of supreme importance, and has been considered to be so throughout the centuries which have passed since the Church was founded by our Lord Jesus Christ. He himself demonstrated the prominence of this sacrament when he issued the following command: *"He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned"* (Mark 16:16). He also commanded His apostles to: *"Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost"* (Matthew 28:19). He also emphasized the importance of being baptized, when He traveled to the Jordan River where John was baptizing, and asked John to be baptize Him, saying: *"Suffer it to be so now: for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness"* (Matthew 3:15).

Many present-day religious leaders teach that baptism is not truly important; thereby contradicting the same Lord they claim to obey and serve. They are following the example of the Pharisees and lawyers who "rejected the counsel of God against themselves" by refusing to be baptized by John (Luke 7:30). Nevertheless, this tract is not directed to those who oppose the Word of God, but to the sincere

Christians, who, having a pure and sincere heart, want to obey the Word of God. These Christians are willing to obey God's commandments, whether they come directly from the Lord or through His apostles, since the Lord bestowed upon them His authority when He declared: *"He that receiveth you receiveth me, and he that receiveth me receiveth him that sent me"* (Matthew 10:40). I must clarify here, that I am not discussing the subject of water baptism with the purpose of obtaining members for a certain religious denomination or organization. Rather, my goal is that the obedient Christian, whoever and wherever he is, will receive from God the fullness of His salvation. Now that we are aware of these basic truths, let us now continue in our discussion by considering the following questions.

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF WATER BAPTISM?

The Lord stated that the *"he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved"* (Mark 16:16). On the Day of Pentecost, the Holy Spirit, through Peter's lips, declared: *"Repent and be baptized, every one of you...for the remission of your sins..."* (Acts 2:38). Paul, referring to the Lord's sacrifice, declares that the Lord gave Himself for His Church *"that He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing*

of water (baptism) by the Word" (Eph. 5:26). Peter, referencing the fact that Noah was saved by water in the ark, states: *"The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us..."* (1 Peter 3:21).

HOW SHOULD WATER BAPTISM BE ADMINISTERED?

Paul explains to us that baptism is a symbol of the burial of one who has died. For this reason he poses the following question: *"Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into His death? Therefore we are buried with Him by baptism into death"* (Rom. 6:3). On another occasion he explains to us that we are *"BURIED with Him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with Him"* (Col. 2:12). According to these Scriptures, baptism is a symbolic burial through which the believer, now dead to the world (repented) is buried in the waters of baptism and emerges from them, ready to live a new life in Christ. For this reason, baptism should be administered through immersion, submerging the body of the penitent completely in water, according to the example given by the Lord Himself when He entered into the Jordan River to be baptized: *"And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water"*



the Church were all baptized calling upon the Name of Jesus Christ, and never with the titles Father, Son and Holy Spirit: **Acts 2:38, Acts 8:16, Acts 10:48, Acts 19:5, Acts 22:16, Rom. 6:3, Gal. 3:27, 1 Pet. 3:21.** The baptism invoking the titles of Father, Son and Holy Spirit was not utilized in the apostolic era or in the first centuries of the Church. It was an interpretation which came later as part of the package of many other false doctrines, fruit of the apostasy, which were accepted and confirmed by the Council of Nicea in the year 325 A.D.

TO WHOM DOES THE BAPTISM BY IMMERSION, INVOKING THE NAME OF THE LORD JESUS, APPLY?

You, the reader, can find the answer in the Word of God. It is for the Jews (**Acts 2:36-38**). It is for the Samaritans (**Acts 8:14-16**). It is for the Gentiles (**Acts 10:45-48**). It is for believers who have already been baptized with other baptisms (**Acts 19:1-5**). *"For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call"* (**Acts 2:39**).

In conclusion: My beloved brethren and friends, if you love the Lord and are one of those who are interested in being sure of the salvation of your soul, we sincerely invite you in the love of Christ to meditate on this important doctrinal subject. The message contained within this tract is not merely a denominational point of view, but is a very specific commandment given by the Lord Jesus Christ Himself, who declared: "He who believeth and is baptized shall be saved."

Note: If you were enlightened by reading this brief tract or if it awakened an interest in you to know more about this fundamental doctrine in the process of salvation, we invite you to visit your brethren at the address listed on this tract or write to the editor of Publicaciones "Maranatha." ■

WHAT MUST I DO TO BE SAVED?

PASTOR EFRAIM VALVERDE, SR.

"Then he called for a light, and sprang in, and came trembling, and fell down before Paul and Silas, and brought them out, and said, Sirs, what must I do to be saved? And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house" (**Acts 16:29-31**).

I must inform you that this message is not for everyone. It is only for those who are convinced of the fact that none of the many things that this world has to offer can give the peace that their soul desires.

Neither is it written with the intent of obtaining followers by attempting to convince someone to leave their religion to accept a different one. On the contrary, it is for those who have already experienced the fact that no religion can change their lives. This message is intended to help those who, because of the miserable circumstances in which they presently live, whether it is a sickness, marital or family problems, addictions, traumas, prisons or similar situations, have arrived at the conclusion that only God can deliver them.

It is for those who have come to the point in their lives in which they are compelled to ask the same question that the jailer at Philippi asked Paul and Silas: *"What must I do to be saved?"* If you find yourself

in this category, through the love of Christ the Lord, I will explain to you God's plan of salvation precisely as it is described in the Holy Bible.

FIRST STEP: You must acknowledge and confess your misery and need before God, and you must sincerely repent from your sins. Without this fundamental step, everything else you do will be in vain (**Acts 3:19**).

SECOND STEP: You must now accept the Lord Jesus as the Savior of your soul. You must believe that by His Grace and His Blood that He shed on the cross, He is able to cleanse all your sins, no matter how filthy they might be (**Isaiah 1:18**).

THIRD STEP: You must believe that by doing the previous step, this is proof that you have become a partaker of the miracle of having been *"born again"* (**John 3:3**), which is the same miracle as having been *"born of God"* or *"begotten of God"* (**1 John 5:18**).

FOURTH STEP: It is now imperative for you to be immersed in the waters of baptism just as the Lord was, making certain that when you do so, the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ is invoked upon you (**Acts 2:28 and 4:12**).

FIFTH STEP: Being now a *"child of God"* (**1 John 1:12**), a *"new creature in Christ"* (**2 Corinthians 5:17**), allow the Lord—who now lives within you—to direct you in how you must live, what you must do and what things are not beneficial to you.

SIXTH STEP: The Lord has promised to give each of His children the power of His Holy Spirit to help us to overcome and to give forth the *"fruit of the Spirit"* (**Galatians 5:22**). Ask the Lord to give you this gift together with the evidence of *"speaking with other tongues"* (**Acts 2:4**).

SEVENTH STEP: Exercise yourself in reading the Word of God so that you might grow spiritually and become grounded in your faith. Occupy yourself as much as possible in serving others, thereby doing God's work.

FINAL STEP: now try to live the rest of your life in peace and in holiness, loving everyone, and being in communion with those who love the Lord as you love Him now. Seek out as much as you can the fellowship of those who live *"looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ"* (**Titus 2:13**).

CONCLUSION: Even though we may not know you, the Lord knows who you are, and our prayer is that He will bless you. We also ask our Lord Jesus that He will work in your life, praying that the plan described in this tract will bring the change in your life that you greatly desire. If the Lord places in your heart the desire to receive help from us in any way that we can, please contact us. We are here to serve you ■

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FUNDAMENTAL CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE

The LORD our God is one
LORD (Dt.6:4)

God is not a Trinity
(John 1:1, Col. 1:15)

The Supreme Name of our
God
Is the LORD Jesus Christ
(Phil. 2:9)

Baptism is by immersion
(Rom. 6:4)
In the name of the LORD
Jesus Christ (Act. 2:38)

The Holy Spirit of God
manifests itself by means of
the fruits (Gal. 5:22-26)
The gift of the Holy Ghost by
the evidence of speaking in
tongues.

Seeking to live a sanctified life
is an imperative requirement
(Heb. 12:14)

The Church is ONE and it
belongs to the LORD
(Matthew 16:18, Acts 20:28)

The Church of the LORD is
not a religious organization,
It is the body of Christ
(I Cor. 12:27, 2 Tim. 2:19)

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